

WOMEN AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE —

As a Matter of Fact

- ▼ In 2002, 18.1 percent of the pregnant women in Missouri reported smoking during their pregnancy.
- ▼ In 2002, 222 Missouri newborns were affected by illicit drugs; this was an increase of 11 births over 2001.
- ▼ Combined national data from 2000 and 2001 show that 8.3 percent of non pregnant women aged 15 to 44 reported using illicit drugs in the month prior to the interview.
- ▼ In 2002, there were 670,307 drug related visits to emergency departments (ED) nationwide. Of these episodes 308,098 involved females, a 22% increase from the 252,128 female ED visits in 1995. In 2002, there were 1,209,938 ED drug mentions, 553,874 of which involved females.
- ▼ Women who drink heavily or are alcoholic are more likely to become victims of the alcohol-related aggression, such as date rape.
- ▼ In 2002, nearly 2 million women aged 18 or older were estimated to have both serious mental illness (SMI) and a substance use disorder during the past year.
- ▼ In Missouri, the reported number of newborns born to women who drank alcohol during pregnancy decreased from 553 in 2001 to 517 in 2002.
- ▼ Marital status influences drinking habits. Among women aged 21 to 49, married women were less likely to have used tobacco, engaged in binge alcohol use, or used any illicit drug in the past month compared with women who were divorced or separated, never married, or living with an unmarried partner.
- ▼ Despite their relatively low consumption levels, women account for nearly one-half of cirrhosis deaths among American Indians.
- ▼ In 2000, 14 percent of all adult female admissions to substance abuse treatment were for the primary use of crack cocaine. The average length of crack use was 12 years prior to admission.
- ▼ In Missouri, the number of pregnant women entering substance abuse treatment has increased steadily from 176 women in 1998 to 305 in 2003.
- ▼ In 2002, 42% of the patients treated in the emergency department for amphetamines or methamphetamines were women.

- ▼ The drug with the highest prevalence of use among pregnant women ages 15 to 44 was marijuana, with 2.9% reporting past month marijuana use.
- ▼ The impact of alcohol appears to be greater upon women than men.
- ▼ Women who abuse alcohol or drugs are at a higher risk for HIV / AIDS, tuberculosis, oral and pharyngeal cancer, injury, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- ▼ Women are more susceptible to alcohol-related liver damage. They develop liver disease in a shorter period of time and at lower levels of consumption. The number of alcoholic women who develop alcohol-related liver disease is higher than among alcoholic men.
- ▼ Repeated or sustained episodes of alcohol intoxication may suppress hormonal activity in women. Studies suggest that there is a higher prevalence of menstrual dysfunction and accelerated onset of menopause among alcoholic women. Other problems such as obstetrical disorders and gynecological surgery and sexual dysfunction are also more common.
- ▼ In 2002, 4.4 percent of women reported using marijuana during the past month while eight percent of men did. The same research found that 36 percent of women have used marijuana at some point during their lifetime.
- ▼ Among pregnant women in the United States, aged 15 to 44 in 2002, 9.1% used alcohol and 3.1% reported binge drinking in the month prior to the survey. Heavy alcohol use was relatively rare at .7%.
- ▼ Among non pregnant women aged 15 to 44, 53.4% use alcohol and 23.4% binge drink.
- ▼ In the United States today, over 77,000 women have been diagnosed with AIDS attributed to injection drug use or sex with an IDU (injecting drug user), and nearly a third of AIDS cases in adult/adolescent women diagnosed in 2001 reported injection drug use or sex with an IDU as their primary risks.
- ▼ Women entered the substance abuse treatment system through different avenues than men. Women were less likely than men to be referred by the criminal justice system and more likely to be referred by community, religious, or governmental organizations/agencies or by self help groups.



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